

out the invention more carefully, and it is believed that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Some errors in the specification were noted, and have been corrected. Additionally, the "connector" was sometimes referred to as a "connection", and this has been changed to be consistent.

It is thought that some discussion of the nature of the invention would be helpful before discussing the specific rejections. The present day self contained breathing apparatus equipment utilizes a backframe to support the air tanks, with straps to secure the backframe to the user. This backframe is either a flat sheet of material, or an open frame made of tubular rods or the like. In either case, the air tank is fixed to one side, and the other side is received on the back of the user. The various components for control and monitoring are then simply hung off the harness or the backframe. With today's technology, when everything is computer controlled, there is concern for enclosing the electronic components. So far, people have just put the electronics in a box, and hung the box on the backframe or the harness.

The present invention seeks to improve the backframe itself. Instead of simply a plate, or an open frame, the backframe of the present invention has one plate designed to conform to the back of the user for great comfort for the user, and another plate spaced from the first, and shaped to receive the air tank. The space between the first and second plates is enclosed by side walls, and this provides a dry and secure place for electronics, safety signals and the like. The space is kept to a minimum because it is desirable to have the air tank as close to the user's back as is reasonably possible. It will be understood, however, that there is always some space because the air tank is straight and the user's back is curved. As a result, even with an open

frame, there will be space between the back and the air tank. The present invention therefore encloses this space, and makes use of the space.

Turning then to the specific rejection of the claims, claims 1—3 were rejected as unpatentable over Bartos in view of Berndt. Bartos discloses a closed circuit breathing apparatus having an oxygen bottle, a breathing sack and an air scrubber. Bartos then puts all this into a box for protection of the components. The box is incidental to the invention, and is not claimed as invention. The important point, however, is that everything is inside the box, and the box is to be carried by hand (see strap 42).

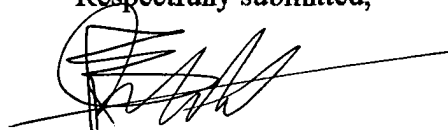
The Berndt disclosure is similar to Bartos in that there is an air supply in a box. Berndt actually claims the box, but discloses none of the features of the present invention. Furthermore, no combination of Bartos and Berndt can produce the present invention. There is no thought of placing the air tank outside the box; there is no thought of shaping the box to conform to the person; and, there is no thought of providing a secure space for control components.

Claim 1 as amended makes it clear that the invention comprises a backframe having two plates that are separated, defining a secure compartment therebetween. One plate is shaped to conform to the back of the user, and the other plate is shaped to conform to the air tank. There is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art to make such a backframe, and claim 1 should be allowable. Claims 2—7 are dependent from claim 1 and should also be allowable.

A new claim, claim 8, has been added. Claim 8 is of substantially the same scope as claim 1, but is stated differently to point out the important features of the invention. For the reasons given above, claim 8 should be allowable.

Effort has been made by this amendment to place the application in condition for allowance, and such action is solicited. If the Examiner has any question about the application or this amendment, a telephone call to the undersigned attorney of record is invited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Middleton', is written over a horizontal line.

James B. Middleton  
Attorney of Record

Telephone: 404-377-5327

Attorney File: 1339.08.A